A

LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, ESQ. M.P.

ON THE SUBJECT OF

EMIGRATION.

By H. B. SAWBRIDGE, Esq.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1832.

LONDON:

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,

ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

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&c.

SIR,

I VENTURE to address this published letter to you, not only because it affords me a pretext for placing in the title page a name which every Englishman must look upon with respect, nor merely because it is animating and cheering to address, even in imagination, an individual who has so nobly exerted himself in the cause of humanity; I have still a further motive, I indulge a hope that I can prove to you that the object, which you wish to attain, is to be reached by a route different from that which you point out; that the only practicable plan, for diffusing competency among the mass of our countrymen, is not that which you recommend, but another; and, if I can do this, I shall have engaged in the support of that other an able and eloquent advocate, zealous in promoting the happiness of his fellow-creatures, and whose distinguished station will itself give credit to the cause which he espouses.

The general impression made by your writings

appears to me to be the following:—that, as the land in this country, when more labour is applied to it, is capable of feeding many more persons than exist in it at present, additional hands are, in fact, additional wealth; that it is therefore the duty of rulers to direct the upper classes to employ the labouring classes, and to enforce obedience to this direction; that labour is never superfluous, because it is the ordinance of Providence that man shall gain his living by the sweat of his brow; that the tendency of human affairs, being adapted to this, is so ordered as to carry human beings, on the soil where they were born and bred, to the highest possible degree of prosperity and happiness.

One is here naturally tempted to ask, Why does not this happy adjustment show itself in the British Islands? Where and when can we expect it, if it is not seen here at the present moment? For, on the one hand, the working classes of this country are as able, and as willing, to carry on their useful labour, as any who ever existed in the world; set them to agriculture, or to manufactures, place them on land, or on the sea, their equals are nowhere to be found for resolute diligence, or bodily strength: and, on the other hand, never, in any age or country, were persons so disposed to promote the benefit of their fellow-subjects as the upper classes of society in these realms, who testify this disposition, not by barren wishes, and cheap expressions of kindness, but by substantial sacrifices of time,

attention, and money, to a degree of which the world cannot show another example.

But the scene which we are compelled to behold presents a melancholy contrast to that which we might, according to your system, expect in a country possessing such advantages. Workmen of all kinds are at best but very moderately paid, and labourers in many parishes, being directed to stand in some appointed place, do, in fact, remain there all day, in considerable numbers, and not being hired by any one, are then paid by the overseer the lowest sum which will supply a sufficiency of food to themselves and their families. In other parishes labourers are sent, for the same low wages, to work in troops on roads which do not require them; the bread which the labourer eats is often embittered by the reflection that he is not benefiting the master who supplies it, who would prefer being without his labour, if he could at the same time be relieved from the necessity of feeding him. Surely this is not a state of things in which we can fairly conclude that Providence wills us to be inert? What we see around us seems, at least, to direct to the most diligent inquiry, whether some expedient not hitherto tried, or not sufficiently tried, might not remedy evils which are admitted to be very great? I perfectly agree with you, that the difficulty does not proceed from the incapability of the land we inhabit to produce more food; and it seems odd, undoubtedly, when the soil will pro-

duce more on receiving more culture, and when there are plenty of hands ready to work on it, that man should want a sufficiency of food.

When we are startled at an unexpected fact we look about for information; and as we are surprised that more persons are *not* satisfactorily fed, it is natural to inquire how it comes to pass that so many *are* fed,—that food finds its way into the mouths of those multitudes that we see around us?

For this purpose, it may, in the first place, be useful to trace the progress of cultivation. It is well known that where man remains in his savage state, very little food is produced; each district is very thinly peopled; immense regions are haunted, rather than inhabited, by a few wandering families: it is not till property is ascertained and secured, that the earth begins to show what it is capable of, and the human species spreads in multiplied numbers over the land. The sacredness of property is the foundation of all improvement: it gives birth to all the wealth of man, except that miserable pittance which he enjoys in common with the inferior animals, for no one will sow unless he has some prospect of reaping.

This being granted, the next step in the course of the argument is to point out the motive which prompted men to provide more than what was conducive to the support and comfort of themselves and their immediate families.

It appears to me that in the early stages of civi-

lization, the principal inducement to cultivate and improve the soil, arose from the delight which a chieftain took in the multitude of his vassals: fidelity and obedience on their part, was rewarded by food and protection from their superior, who was induced to improve his land that it might feed a greater number of those retainers from whom he derived his security, his power, and his splendour. Here the superior lord saw, and exulted in, the increasing numbers of his dependents. If he was warlike, they followed him to battle; if he was fond of display, they swelled the pomp which surrounded his person; if he was peaceful and benevolent, he delighted in witnessing the plenty which they enjoyed; but in all cases something of personal recognition mixed itself with the predominant motive which excited him to render his land more productive of food.

The succeeding stage in the progress of wealth and population is that which we witness in the civilized world at present, in which, the arts of life having attained a high degree of perfection, the productions of those arts become the chief incitements to raise food and multiply the number of workmen. Here personal attachment goes but very little way in aiding the barter between those who are fed, and those who form the arrangements to supply food; for all personal knowledge is soon lost in the mazes of a more complicated formation of society; in this stage workmen are fed for the

sake of the productions of their hands. Now if we had no experience of what would follow on this change of motive, we may picture to ourselves that it would form an interesting subject for speculation; but we have had this experience: we have seen that a rapid multiplication of the human species has been the result. Population has made its greatest start immediately after the improvement of manufactured articles.

This fact appears to warrant an inference, not indeed gratifying or creditable to human nature, but still I believe a just inference, namely, that the wish to enjoy the result of their labour is the most effectual of all motives to induce men to feed and clothe their fellow-creatures; and the presumption thus afforded is confirmed by other well-known occurrences, tending to prove that the manufacture has not been caused by the population, but has itself given opportunity to the increase of numbers. For instance, in those places where, from local and accidental circumstances, any thing particularly attractive could be produced or prepared, there population sprung up; the improvements in the manufacture of cotton, by which it has been rendered so attractive an article of commerce, have been succeeded by a rapid increase in the numbers of human beings. No one could, for a moment, think of asserting that the numbers of individuals in the cotton districts of England, caused the discovery and adaptation of the improvements in

machinery. Again, the mines of the precious metals in the other hemisphere are surrounded by highly cultivated districts, swarming with inhabitants : it would be ridiculous to maintain that those inhabitants caused the mines to be discovered and worked ; it was the attractiveness of the articles, made and prepared in each of the districts, which enabled the workman to provide for his family, and rear his children, and in due course of years raised the numbers to their existing amount. Let us try whether a closer examination of what occurs around us will give any discountenance or contradiction to this opinion. I think you must admit, that the soil of England would not supply the quantity of food now derived from it, were it not for plans long ago formed, and executed ; inclosures, buildings, roads, canals, and the manuring, and improvement to which these are instrumental, are all necessary, in order that the number of workmen living on the soil should be fed from it. Are such improvements ever made except from an interested motive ? I think not : we often witness persons parting with that which they themselves would wish to retain, in order to relieve others whom they see suffering in a greater degree from the want of it ; many are known to exercise the same beneficence in favour of individuals whose persons they are not acquainted with, and whose story reaches them only through the intervention of others ; some, though this is less common, deprive

themselves of their possessions to promote the general cause of humanity; but it would pass the limit of all that has been enjoined by moralists, if men were to execute plans which must wait for their result till after a long lapse of time, in order to benefit beings of whose existence they are, and must ever remain, utterly ignorant; and it now requires in this country, and long has required such plans, in order to produce an additional quantity of food.

All these plans are formed and executed with the view of making money; and what is money but the mass of articles of necessity, comfort, and ornament, received in exchange for it, consisting chiefly, though not wholly, of manufactured goods, which are the objects of desire, not merely for the pleasure of looking at them, or even of using them, but also, and more, for that consideration and rank in society which the habitual enjoyment, and power of commanding them, confers on those individuals, who through the management of their ancestors or their own, have the requisite resources under their control?

If it be asked what becomes of the benevolent care which the rich ought to take, and do, to a certain degree, take, of their poorer countrymen, I answer that by such acts of beneficence, the destination of the necessary articles of life is altered but the quantity is not increased. A charitable family dismiss their attendants and their equipages,

and refrain from the purchase of expensive furniture, in order to succour unemployed workmen, with their children, who indeed receive the wealth thus benevolently conferred, and are relieved; but those for whom it was destined, according to the arrangements of the community, go without it: there is no addition made to the existing quantity of food, comfort, and luxury, by this change of destination. The head of the family, perhaps, gained the fortune by some successful manufacturing speculation; while he was gaining it, he was adding to the mass of general wealth by which the labour of the working classes is rewarded; and, after he had made the fortune, a new set of arrangements had been formed for bringing into existence an additional quantity of goods suited to the general demand, an essential part of which arrangements was an additional supply of food. Had it not been for these arrangements, together with multitudes of others, for all the various kinds of supply, the income of the rich family would not receive the description by which it is now known: a thousand a year would not be a thousand a year, in the sense which the phrase now conveys to the mind, unless there were certain articles ready to be exchanged for the money more immediately designated by the expression of a thousand a year, but which money, as far as it is money, is only a set of tickets for the transfer and distribution of such articles; those who have made those articles,

or who have qualified themselves for their fabrication, relied on the persuasion that they should thereby gain a honest livelihood; the state of society indicated that such commodities or such services would probably be wanted; and they were properly told that to qualify themselves to supply this demand, was to do their duty in that state to which Providence called them.

The benevolent family may perhaps please themselves by reflecting that they are sacrificing wishes for comforts and luxury which they might gratify; now their very power of sacrificing them implies that there are preparations to gratify them, the articles of which the thousand a year consists having been brought into their state of utility with a view to exchange and barter; but the gratuitous distribution of the necessaries of life does not add to their quantity, nor is that quantity diminished by being paid in return for useful or ornamental articles, the industrious producers of which have probably families, and require food as much as those who resort to charity. Do I then mean to disparage acts of unrequited benevolence? Far from it, such acts are frequently a blessing to those who give, and to those who take; and every deed of kindness, done from a proper motive, is recorded there where our only true interests are placed, and to which our hopes and aspirations ought to be directed. Charitable gifts are often substantially useful to individuals and families, and establishments, gratuitously formed,

are often productive of real and extensive benefit; but I do mean to assert, that this motive can have no important effect on the process through which the myriads, which compose the labouring population of a great people, can be fed and clothed.

This in the present order of things can only be brought about through the incentive of self-interest; and if there are any who are inclined to dispute and resent this assertion, as a satire on human nature, I would remind them, that there is a feeling in the breast of the labourer corresponding to it, for no generous and high-minded workman is satisfied with an employment which brings no benefit to his employer. Set him to a work which is evidently useless, and his blood rises immediately; he feels himself insulted. To be succoured in accidental or unforeseen calamity is degrading to no one; but continued dependence on the gratuitous kindness of another, is not a state in which men generally are, or ought to be, content.

Here, then, we have made another great step in the progress of the inquiry; for, if it be true that the principle of self-interest has cultivated the waste, and turned the wilderness into a garden, that the same principle still keeps the country in that state of cultivation and productiveness which is requisite to supply sufficient food for its inhabitants, that this motive derives its chief energy from the attractiveness of the articles, and refinements of civilized life, we know from what quarter any

reasonable hopes must proceed of the country being in a condition to supply greater numbers with labour and food.

An engineer, when he has found a principle of such extraordinary and transcendant power, as to place all others, previously known, in comparative insignificance, never resorts to those of whose relative inefficiency he has had decisive experience ; if he did so, he would be justly deemed to trifle with those whom he professed to serve. No reasonable person would have recourse to the strength of a child, in cases where the steam-engine has been found inefficient ; but if my reasoning be correct, something very like this is done when the public is asked in a tone of expostulation, why the uncultivated acres of England and Ireland are not resorted to for employing the multitude of labourers who want work ? For this is nothing else than to appeal to the benevolence or public spirit of the country ; and, if the great steam-engine of self-interest has failed to produce this effect, we cannot reasonably expect a better result from the comparatively weak influence of a regard for the welfare of labourers in general. Thus to exhort and censure, is to say be clothed and fed, without giving to those who need them the things requisite for the body, which are only to be provided through well-considered and well-adapted means.

If it be plaintively asked, why in a time of great misery the rich do not divide the commodities of

life with those who are now poor? It may be triumphantly answered, that they *do* make this division; for the rich are they who have stored up a provision of the necessaries of life by which the poor are fed, giving their labour in return. If it be asked, why schemes are not executed by which more of the goods of life might be produced? The answer is, because such schemes do not hold out a prospect of advantage to the undertakers; and if it be again asked, why the schemes are not formed and carried into effect merely from the motive of benefiting others? The answer is, because no such motive, sufficiently powerful, is to be found in the human breast; men do not, and will not execute such plans, unless they are attracted by views of advantage.

Your observations direct your readers to the persuasion, that an able and willing labourer must always be useful to those who employ him; and when such a workman cannot find an employer, you appear to authorise a tone of confident remonstrance, which a person properly assumes who is deprived of that with which in justice he ought to be supplied. Let us suppose such a labourer in want of work, to take for the object of his remonstrance two individuals in the opposite extremes of society, and let the first person be an indigent beggar. If the workman says to him, why have not you or your ancestors before you prepared food which you might give to me in return for my

labour? The answer of the beggar might probably be, that his complaints and reproofs must, at any rate, be fruitless, for that, in point of fact, he neither had made, nor could make, any such preparations; and he might add, that the neglect in himself or his progenitors did not proceed from any disregard to the labourer, or from a wish to deprive him and his family of their food and comforts.

Now let us suppose the labourer to reproach a man of immense wealth, his answer might be, I, with the preparations made for me, and of which I have the disposal, feed a thousand persons, who work for me in return; and, unless I encroach upon my capital, and thereby make a step towards rendering myself incapable of feeding any workmen, I am no more able to feed an additional number, in the same plentiful manner, than the beggar is to feed one. I can indeed displace one of my workmen, by discontinuing my usual habit of buying his production, and take you; but the man, so put out of employment, will have at least as much right to complain of me as you have, and perhaps a greater. As to reproaches, the conduct of my ancestors and myself, who have provided for the support and comfort of so many persons, ought to exempt me from these, at least more than the beggar, who has provided for no one. Surely this is an answer to which the labourer would feel it as difficult to reply as to the answer of the beggar,

and an equally good defence might be made by all persons coming between the beggar and the very wealthy man, and the case would not be materially altered if the labourer were to complain of the Government for not directing a general contribution, for this only comes from a number of persons, each of which would find his place between the two extremes.

Such complaints and remonstrances may pass current when they are obscured under the form of vague generality; but when they are put into an intelligible shape, and applied to individuals, or to any imaginable class of individuals, they cannot be made without outraging the rules of common sense. A different tone is sometimes assumed, when it is represented to those who wish to improve their condition in life, that they may attain this object by employing more workmen; but such assertions are met by others, maintained with equal confidence, and a more direct appeal to facts. It is averred that manufacturers employ their workmen, for a long time together, at a loss, with the hope of better times arriving; that shipowners work their vessels for next to nothing; and that occupiers of land are obliged to be content with the lowest profits, and often lose by their farms. Speculation is carried on, in this country, to an extent never before witnessed in the world; there is capital ready to be embarked in any plan which offers a reasonable hope of advantage, and

persons watching to engage in it themselves, and recommend it to others, and to form companies in which, by dividing the risk, individuals may be induced to engage in projects with the least possible chance of success, and a greater danger of failure, than would be submitted to if each acted alone. Farmers are those generally selected to accuse of a timid unwillingness to employ labourers; persons seldom think of telling a soap-boiler, or a tanner, or a sugar-baker, that he might employ more men to advantage; but is there any reason to suppose that such persons are, in general, more courageous speculators than the farmers, or more to be trusted with the management of their own concerns? The farmers do not plead guilty to the charge of being niggardly speculators; on the contrary, they know that the majority of their body have farmed away a large proportion of their capital during the last twenty years, and all occupiers feel, that when they are obliged to employ more than a certain number of labourers, they have less to spend on their own comforts, and on the education of their children, and less to lay by for their future provision; and that a course of years employed in such losing schemes would exhaust all their power of employing any labourers at all.

In a similar spirit the landlords are told that all the workmen on their estates would add to their riches if they availed themselves properly of their labour. Is this founded on fact? A landlord is

generally one whose land being, by his own exertions, or, more frequently, through those of his predecessors, so improved as to produce much more than it naturally would, supplies rent to its proprietor. This improvement would never have taken place, had its foreseen result been merely to feed individuals, and their families, whose labour did not contribute to the gratification of the proprietor: he is induced to improve it up to that point where it may feed, besides those employed in its cultivation, a certain number of other persons, manufacturers, artisans, and contributors in various ways to the comfort and ornament of life; beyond that point he has no inducement to improve it, because it will not render the supply of what he wishes to have more plentiful. To speak in ordinary language; it will answer to him to improve it so far, and after that he will rather lose than gain by spending more money upon it; but he is forced by law to pay more labourers than would be employed according to the most advantageous plan of cultivating the land: these labourers are paid through the intervention of a tenant, but the money comes out of the landlord's income; his rent is diminished below what it would be if no such labourers were in existence; the landlord is thereby rendered poorer, and is perhaps himself obliged to forego the comforts and happiness of domestic life, because so many labourers with their families must be fed on his estate. The labourer is conscious that

he is felt as an incumbrance by the parish, he is maintained at the cheapest rate with the smallest quantity of food which will keep human beings in health; and perhaps tempted to crime and outrage by the discomfort and wretchedness of his condition. Now surely to tell one of these parties, that he is wealth to the other, is to add mockery and insult to the misery suffered by both.

It is obvious that some parishes may have too many labourers, for it will not be denied that there is a limit to the number which may be set to work on a farm without loss to the occupier. One parish may have exactly the right number for the farms, and the adjoining parish, with the same opportunities for speculating, may have double the number, and what gives to our present difficulties the most alarming character is, that the very number of labourers which a parish is bound to employ, operates as a discouragement to plans which would employ them, since a speculator would prefer for such plans, the parish which was least burdened with poor; so that the very circumstance which increases the amount of our distresses, diminishes also our means of meeting them.

I think you somewhere admit that population may double itself in less than fifty years, other able writers on the same subject have named a much shorter time, let us fix on forty-five years, and then in ninety years our twenty millions would be increased to eighty. This is a pretty numerous

family to provide for: all which, according to the above supposition, might come upon us in the lifetime of several who are now born, particularly since, though much burthened with the family which we have now, we have undertaken, at least in England, to provide for all of them, if they should be born.

I am aware you maintain that the benevolent laws of Providence will gently adapt the numbers to the food. That they will be so adapted is quite clear; I think, however, that it will not be gently, but with much disappointment, privation, and consequent discontent and turbulence; and, at any rate, where population is kept down, below what it might rise to, there must be an absence of all the domestic happiness which would attend the further increase of population; there must be less family affection and kindly feeling than there might be.

Besides this consideration, the scanty and unsatisfactory manner, in which so large a portion of our countrymen is supplied with food, is admitted by all. This is a present evil which stares us in the face, and which we lament in common, and where are we to find a remedy? Would it do any good, even on the supposition that there were tongues and pens sufficiently eloquent to induce a compliance with the recommendation, if the rich were persuaded to leave off buying articles of elegance and ornament, and dismiss their servants and at-

tendants, in order to feed the suffering poor;—this would be to starve those who, through honest industry, are now able to gain a livelihood. But the supposition is, we know, a wild and improbable fancy; self-interest is, when large numbers of human beings are to be affected, the strongest motive which we know of, and where this is exhausted, it is hopeless to have recourse to any other. Self-interest has raised the numbers of human beings in Great Britain to their present amount, which is, perhaps, higher than that of any other country of equal extent and fertility; but how are we to carry this motive further? Can we command men to be influenced by the motive of self-interest to employ more workmen?—This is a palpable absurdity. Shall we represent to them that they will be amply rewarded by their self-approbation, and the applause of good men, if they will devise and execute long schemes to add to the mass of wealth, and employ workmen?—This would be to trifle with them. Shall we tell them that they may promote their own interest by giving employment to an additional number of labourers?—They will contradict the fact, and challenge us to point out a promising speculation.

It seems to me idle to expatiate in forcible and eloquent language on the propriety, reasonableness, and policy of employing the poor;—this is mere sound and fury, and signifies nothing. Can we by such means convince an industrious young

couple, who wish to marry, that there is such a prospect of their labours being required and paid for, as to justify their marrying? Can we give them any just ground to be so convinced? I think not; they see others, who have taken the same step, suffering under severe poverty; they hear their own friends dissuading them from a marriage which they represent as likely to add to their difficulties; and they know that the parish around them will look upon their offspring as an aggravation of their own burthens, and a diminution of the means which they possess of bringing up their own children. The consequence is, that those who are high-minded and considerate, frequently break off or defer their marriages, and the population is chiefly kept up by the reckless, the dissolute, and the rebellious; the torch of hymen seldom burns among the peasantry of this country with an unsullied flame, and by the existing circumstances of the community, a selection is made of the worst part of the population for performing the important task of bringing up children.

You seem to think that it is unbecoming a believer in religion to suppose, that there can be any natural tendency in human affairs, the result of which would be to withhold from an industrious labourer a sufficiency of food in the soil to which, from his birth and connexions, he properly belongs. I am aware that it is sinful in any who have the means of Christian instruction, to doubt that all

things will finally work together for good to those who sincerely serve their Maker; it is this humble, but unalterable reliance on the goodness of the Supreme Being, which places the Christian on a lofty eminence, above the inordinate cares and solicitudes of the world, and enables him to pursue with cheerful activity the career of his duty; but a proper view of our present state does not justify our thoughts and expectations in fixing a limit to the amount of bitterness which it may please the Almighty to throw into the cup of that life which we know to be one of discipline and preparation; evil does exist in the world, and an important part of our revealed duty consists of our honest, sincere, and diligent attempts to diminish it. This is the proper exercise of those talents of which an account is to be rendered at the day of judgment, and we must take care not to come to a hasty and erroneous conclusion, that nothing is to be done to avert or alleviate those worldly sufferings which we witness or apprehend.

In the natural body, individual pain and uneasiness suggest that something should be done which the order of Providence renders conducive to health and strength; hunger, for instance, prompts us to eat. Why should it be thought improbable, that in the social body an analogous degree of pain and uneasiness, such as we nationally feel at present, should be intended to direct us to some national act? And surely the presumption is always in

favour of that which has its result in exertion and activity rather than of what ends merely in supineness and acquiescence.

Before I proceed to enlarge upon my persuasion that the national attention ought to be directed to a well-regulated and more extensive system of emigration, I wish to observe upon two plans which might seem to offer substitutes for emigration, and to render it unnecessary ;—the first is the plan of minute cultivation. I am perfectly aware that a considerate landlord may do much good by apportioning reasonable quantities of land to the heads of families, as an assistance and addition to what they gain by their daily labour ; but, in order to make any material addition to the population, the plan must assume a very different character, for the voluntary employment of labourers would not be thereby increased ; the plan must not merely provide an addition to wages, it must be a substitute for all wages, and the only means of provision. Fertile land, so apportioned, would undoubtedly feed an immense population ; but, let it be recollected, in the first place, that every foot of land in this country is appropriated to some individual or body of men ; all the land which is productive and advantageously situated and secure from turbulence and outrage, is made the most of already ; the owner is induced to employ labourers upon it, and improve it, by a regard to his own advantage. No comprehensive plan for placing great masses

of needy persons on such land can be executed without infringing the rules of justice, and rendering all property insecure; it would be little short of dividing all the land amongst the population as it gradually increased: the very first establishment of such a plan would work sudden destruction both of rich and poor, by withdrawing all motive to execute or continue schemes for improvement of any kind. It is, indeed, generally recommended that some refuse district of moor or heath should be destined for such a colony. Life might doubtless be preserved by raising roots on such a district; the population, however, so sustained, would be too small, in proportion to our national numbers, to afford any sensible relief to our difficulties: it would be a population wretched beyond any that we see in England at present, and probably would require an army in its neighbourhood to keep it in order. For it will not be disputed by any sober person, that subordination is requisite not merely for the comfort of society, but essential also to the maintenance of the numbers in any thickly-peopled district; and it is most important to keep in mind, that where population increases in the ordinary way, from the accumulation of wealth, and the consequent preparation and demand for labourers, a connexion and dependence naturally forms itself among all the gradations of society; the man of accumulated wealth, in consequence of his leisure, certainly ought to have, and generally,

in fact, has, those qualifications which render him a proper person to possess influence over the community, and it is the natural effect of wealth to confer influence upon him, for the class below him are dependent upon him for custom.—Again, the agriculturist, manufacturer, and speculator of every kind, possesses an influence over his workmen; every farm and workshop, where employment arises from voluntary bargains, is inhabited, as it were, by a great family, where reigns that reciprocal regard which naturally springs in well-disposed minds from frequent intercourse and a sense of mutual benefit. Add to this, that the minds and bodies of all are kept in constant and beneficial exercise; thus guards and bulwarks of order naturally form themselves; but how different is the case when the mass of the population are fed, each family, from a small garden, with little other employment than what is requisite for its cultivation! The individuals are not occupied in labour more than a third of the year; during all the remaining part of it they are unoccupied, and that energy, which is capable of being so useful, is left to be worked upon by all the restless passions of human nature; they compose the fittest materials for the designs of the crafty, who seldom fail to avail themselves of the opportunity to gratify their ambition, their vanity, or their avarice, by exciting them to turbulence and outrage. If things were ever brought to such a state that the mass of the

inhabitants of these islands consisted of persons so situated, I believe that government would be impossible, and it would be not unreasonable to apprehend that, after a century or two of sanguinary civil wars, the people would be reduced to barbarism, and to the scantiness of population which belongs to a state of barbarism.

By the second of the two plans to which I alluded as substitutes for emigration, I mean the repealing the corn laws, and trusting, for requisite food, to the foreign corn which may be imported in exchange for our manufactured articles : and here I wish it to be borne in mind, that it is not a small increase of numbers that we are seeking to provide for. I am calculating on an increase of sixty millions in ninety years, which, though it may appear large, is far below what the average of writers on the subject would deem within the bounds of probability, provided nature had her course ; it is based on a doubling in forty-five years ; the Israelites must have doubled in less than thirty years, in order to reach the amount of their population, which may be inferred from what is recorded of them when they left Egypt ; and there is no ground, that I am aware of, for supposing that this was a miraculous increase of population, though the state in which they were providentially placed, might make it proper to look upon it as above the probable average increase of the human species ; but a doubling in forty-five years I believe to be a

rate of increase for which nature struggles violently. Now, though it is undoubtedly possible for a people who live even on a barren rock to manufacture goods for which they receive food in return, to any amount, and there is no contradiction in imagining that sixty millions of human beings might be thus fed in England; yet as a practical supposition it is utterly absurd. After a very moderate increase of numbers the same decay of motive would put a stop to further augmentation. I admit that taking off the restriction on the entry of corn would give new play to the motive of self-interest; but if we reckon that a million more workmen would, on that account, be employed and fed, we should probably much exceed the truth. Now it is clear that such a project would, as the means of giving up the reins to nature in her efforts to increase population, be futile: on this supposition we provide for a million, and we want to provide for sixty millions. But would it be politic and safe to encourage the increase of one million under such circumstances? I think not:—that million of workmen would be dependent in a double way on our continental neighbours; a periodical supply to so large an amount would very soon be grown on some marked district. The course of things naturally introduces an arrangement of this kind; every tract of vineyards has its destination to some known market; seizing that district of corn would bring us to starvation: the ceasing of the demand for our articles, which might

happen from a hundred causes, would also bring us to a starvation more hopeless than the same occurrence would cause at present. A nation of subordinate consequence, which rests on the forbearance of its neighbours, may, without additional danger, depend on districts under foreign control for a periodical supply of necessary food; but this is not a state to which a great country, exercising an envied influence over the civilized world, can prudently bring itself; its greatness and influence would cease with its independence, and it is not likely that its wealth would long survive. If the above reasoning be correct, this substitute for emigration, applied in a small way, which is the only practicable way, is a dangerous measure, and in that great scale, in which alone it could be a resource for the exigencies we are discussing, it is, besides being dangerous, utterly impossible.

I have now arrived at the close of my arguments on the hopelessness of providing sufficiently while they remain in this land, for the increasing numbers of our countrymen; permit me to repeat shortly, what I have maintained: in the first place, I say that the security of property is requisite in order to render a district capable of supplying more than a few wandering families, and, through all the subsequent stages of improvement, wide-spreading want and misery can only be averted by the inviolability of property, and the more perfect it is the better; that is, the more a man is left to do what

he will with his own, to keep it, or to barter it for any thing that suits him better, and to pursue his own interest in his own way. In the next place, I say, that for supplying the labourer with food and employment, the most effectual means proceed from the motive of self-interest, rendered active by the attractiveness of the arts of civilized life; that nothing else could enable a country to reach any thing like the amount of employed population which we now see in these islands; that when this motive exhausts itself, or by being clogged and impeded, ceases to operate, it is utterly impossible to supply its place, and workmen will find no demand for their labour, though the land is capable of being further improved, and producing more. Rulers and influential persons, may command, persuade, and reproach, but it will be quite unavailing; though there is no natural impediment to employing and feeding more persons, yet the moral impediment, arising from the want of motive, is quite insurmountable; the increasing population will, probably, for a long time, be kept from starving, partly through compulsion, and partly from humanity; but a population thus kept from starving, is not placed on that respectable footing which befits an honest and industrious labourer. Such a population is a burthen to those who have accumulated wealth, and it disheartens and discourages persons from accumulating more wealth, and while

it increases its own numbers, it diminishes the means of its own satisfactory and proper support.

Can it then be reasonable to pronounce that the inhabitants of an island ought to remain where they were born? Our own experience tends to contradict this, for our countrymen are now suffering severe misery, and while they remain, there is no prospect of its being removed, or alleviated. Does then the injunction, "Be fruitful and multiply," of necessity lead to want and misery? Before we presume to draw such an inference, we should at least finish the sentence, which concludes thus, "and replenish the earth, and subdue it;" and surely it is no forced explanation of these words, if we say that they mean, "Remove on proper occasions into those parts of the earth which are still uninhabited, and there, by that fore-thought and contrivance which constitute the privilege of a reasonable being, render them fit for the habitation of man, and the support of increasing numbers." We are not told to be fruitful and multiply, and stay in the land where we were born, but replenish the earth and subdue it; and, unless these words have some such meaning as that which I have mentioned, it seems to me that the phrase must be considered as having no meaning at all: at any rate, they ought to lead us to consider, in this season of distress and difficulty, when there is no obvious remedy to a national disease which preys

upon us, whether large and systematic emigration does not hold out a hope of cure.

Our attention must first be directed to a people who are pursuing a course nearly allied to that which is suggested, namely, the Anglo-Americans, who, whatever may be said to their disparagement, form, at this moment, the most gratifying feature in the civilized world. They are stated to be uncourteous and inelegant, and to be lamentably deficient in those graces of manner which contribute so essentially to the happiness of life: I suspect there is some exaggeration in these censures, but the important point for us to consider is —their national prosperity and exemption from the evils under which we are groaning. The Anglo-American nation is a more rapidly improving nation than any other which is recorded in history, or which exists on the earth; the inhabitants are pursuing their peaceful, but glorious, career, absorbed in the enjoyment of their own prosperity: before them the black, silent, and useless forest recedes under their well-instructed labour; behind them is a fruitful garden, swarming with animation, and studded with well-peopled cities, increasing every year in opulence and splendour; while their star-spangled banner dances over the ocean, conveying their merchandise to the most distant corners of the earth, and raising in every mind of common information, associations of national and individual happiness, of domestic plenty, and well rewarded

labour. Does this prosperity proceed from their republican government, from their avowed principle of equality, from their neglecting to form an alliance between civil government and true and pure religion? Far from it, all these things are against them: it proceeds plainly from this, that they have undertaken the part of peopling the earth, that the population is inspired with the wish, and that they also know how to adapt hitherto uninhabited regions to the habitation and nourishment of man, and that they are thus enabled to provide unlimited incitement, work, and food to all their increasing numbers.

I am very far from being disposed to hold up the American institutions to admiration; on the contrary, I think that a kingly government is best suited to the nature of man, and most conducive to the prosperity of individuals. True loyalty, while it is ennobled by that personal and individual attachment, which has so strong a tendency to exalt and improve the human mind, has still an intelligible bearing on the general welfare; a subject of these united realms, while he loves and honours his king, feels also that he is supporting that useful concentration of power by which it is enabled more effectually to protect him and all his countrymen.

The institution of an hereditary nobility is not to be replaced, or compensated for, by any other human contrivance; it brings into existence an

order of men inspired with sentiments which materially tend to dignify the character; sentiments which, deriving their origin from the best propensities of human nature,—from filial respect and parental regard,—produce a fruit which might be expected from such a stock. I am persuaded that this institution, as it exists in England, has no tendency to foster pride, but rather discourages it, in the superior, as well as the inferior, and one cannot help contrasting it advantageously with American equality, which, in practice, seems a plan for diffusing pride over a whole people. The nobility of these realms are not only requisite as a link between the throne and the people, but they also create an excitement, which, in the formation and diffusion of wealth, is beneficially felt by all grades of society.

The maintenance and promotion of true religion, to which a church establishment is so conducive, is an essential part of our duty as Christians, but besides this, it can hardly have escaped the notice of the most careless observer, that the practice enjoined by the Gospel, is powerfully conducive to the welfare of society; and sound reason teaches to look upon the national alliance with a pure part of the true church, as an advantage of the highest temporal, as well as spiritual importance.

In all these points we have the advantage over the Americans, but still, compared with them, we are a wretched people; the Americans have the advantage over us in this one point, namely, that

they are able to marry and provide for their families at a suitable age, and each individual becomes thus attached to the general welfare through his private and domestic ties, and has an animating and generally successful occupation provided for himself and all around him; and this condition is so fruitful of national prosperity, that it carries the vessel of the commonwealth along its glad course, laughing at the impediments, which in ordinary cases would impede its progress.

Now surely common sense, and plain reason, should direct us to imitate, if we can, that which we see is productive of so much happiness; and it seems to me that, unless we do this, we must make up our minds to sink deeper in embarrassment and distress, for there is no other adequate resort for relief, all motive to exertion is drooping, and poverty making strides in proportion.

Reclaiming new land supplies this defect, for the improvement and arrangement of a plot of ground which is secured to a proprietor, gives an excitement which never fails to be generally effectual. This would probably be the case even in the early stages of improvement, when the productions of art were rude, and comparatively inattractive; but when very fertile land is brought into cultivation, at the same time that highly improved artificers can supply the refinements and elegancies of life, advantages are united which were never contemporaneous in the old world, and the conse-

quence is that such communities, collected together at the present day, make a rapid start into prosperity : witness, not only some of the towns in the United States of America, but our own colony of New South Wales.

Let it not be apprehended that these islands are likely to suffer in their wealth, and resources, or even their population, from the practice of emigration : all experience is against this. During the last fifty years, there has been the most rapid spread from the Anglo-American cities on the coast of the Atlantic, and, during that very time they have greatly increased in importance and riches. New York, in the year 1776, contained 20,000 inhabitants ; it now has 200,000. I think it reasonable to expect that, after we have adopted a periodical system of emigration, so as to prevent our workmen from being ever superfluous and unemployed, our population will be even more numerous, as well as more moral, contented, and wealthy, than it is at present, that our burdens will be less felt, and all speculations more likely to succeed.

It will be replied upon me that emigration is going on : I am aware that it is ; but in a spirit so languid, and in so inadequate a degree, as to hold out but little hope of a restoration of our prosperity. Recourse is only had to it on the pressure of distress ; now, systematically and repeatedly to wait for distress, before we take the requisite step to remove it, is to bargain for distress; it is to say to

ourselves, "at any rate we will contrive so as not to be without distress!" surely the only reasonable way of acting is to foresee and prevent it.

The occupation of clearing and cultivating new land, is, unfortunately, connected in our imaginations with failure in almost all other professions, and pursuits in life; it is looked upon as the last resort of disappointment bordering on despair; now it appears to me, on the contrary, to be an occupation of the most gratifying and honourable description: I think there is no other kind of exploit, which may be looked back upon with such unmixed and unhesitating exultation, as that which may accompany the consciousness of having contributed to bring a district of the earth, which was previously desolate, into a state of cultivation and inhabitancy, that is, in the language of Scripture, "having subdued it."

There is another clumsy and unhappy error, which appears to have some footing among us, namely, that there is a natural connexion between success in clearing land on the one hand, and sordid habits and harsh and repulsive manners on the other. I will venture fearlessly to deny this. In all laudable undertakings the habits and feelings of a gentleman are eminently useful, never-failing truth and sincerity, kind disposition, a dread of insulting or mortifying others, powerfully contribute to general success; and if bodies of men prevail over difficulties who are deficient in these

points, it must be in spite of this deficiency, and not in consequence of it; and I will add, that there is no reason why courtly civility, when transplanted to the shades and green alleys of the forest, should refuse to flourish there, as much as in those capitals whence it first was named, and where it perhaps will continue to be most pretended.

I wish it to be kept in mind, that though the dismissing a part of our population as superabundant, is certainly *a* plan for the improvement of our condition, it is not *the* plan I recommend, in comparison of which, I look upon it as a momentary and paltry expedient: I wish us to become an emigrating people, continuing through ages to multiply and spread. This is a plan of a character essentially different. In the former case an emigrant feels himself cut off as an useless excrescence from the body of which he formerly composed a part; but, as soon as our avowed object is to spread our population over the habitable globe, an emigrant sustains his importance because he is an emigrant; he shares in that national glory which he contributes to augment, while he diffuses it over the distant regions of the earth.

Surely this cannot be considered a senseless project, when we consider that the nature of man is such, that a people can hardly be deemed nationally and individually prosperous and happy, unless they are rapidly increasing in numbers; and, in conjunction with this, when we reflect, that the

world, in which we are, is only begun to be peopled; if all parts of it were inhabited in proportion to their fertility as England is, the earth would perhaps contain a thousand times as many human souls as exist in it at present. It is commonly inferred, from what we know of the other planets, that they are intended by the Almighty for the habitation of reasonable beings; now surely it would be a most glaring inconsistency not to draw the same inference with respect to this earth, of which we know as much as we know of the other planets, and a great deal more besides, all tending to lead us to the same conclusion.

That civilized man is able rapidly to render it conducive to his nourishment and to his wealth, we know from examples which admit of no denial or doubt. The English people have their choice of various parts for forming their settlements; many spacious districts have been ceded long ago to his majesty; many more might be acquired by treaty, or occupied without infringing the rules of justice; but there is one which on all accounts appears far preferable to the rest: I mean Upper Canada. It is admitted to be of remarkable fertility; it is in the latitude of that part of Italy which stretches from near Rome to the Alps; and, when cleared in any considerable degree, the climate would probably be the same, celebrated by poets as doubly productive of the sustenance of man, and at the same time most free from the annoyance of noxious ani-

mals. Upper Canada has almost all the advantages of an island, being nearly surrounded by lakes and broad rivers, uniting also those of a continent, from its neighbourhood to a flourishing people, allied to us by blood, and by language, towards whom it is our duty as well as our interest to cultivate the most kindly feelings, and with whom it will be mutually advantageous to carry on the most friendly intercourse.

I have hitherto been accompanied by some degree of confidence in my observations, for I am fully persuaded that emigration is the proper remedy for the evils which the nation is suffering; but I am very far from feeling any confidence in the suggestions which I venture on the mode of extending it and carrying it on. Here a great difficulty presents itself for before we can stand in the advantageous position of the Anglo-Americans, a wide ocean must be crossed at a considerable expence.

I am well aware of the reluctance which you and every other patriotic person must feel to countenance any plan of national expence; but, before you hopelessly exclude all such proposals as utterly inadmissible, I must beg your attention to the following considerations.

It is not for the sake of realizing any imaginary prospect of national advantage, or gratifying any feeling of ambition, that I venture to suggest expence, but to remedy a pressing evil. If there

be reason to be convinced that prosperity and contentment pervades our fields and villages, and gladdens our towns and cities, in the name of common sense, let us remain as we are, and not try to alter our condition. But this, alas! is not the case; we witness and feel a lamentable degree of suffering, apparently extending itself from the unemployed labourer to the higher grades of society. I admit that the expences of government, and the taxes required to pay that interest which constitutes the national debt, do weigh upon us, but I am not singular in the persuasion that we are sinking through the operation of another cause, —that an energetic, restless, and unemployed population presses upon us more heavily than the king's taxes, more mischievously discouraging every useful plan of improvement, and threatening us in future with far heavier calamities.

No one, I believe, will be disposed to deny this, who, with the view of fair comparison, contemplates, on the one hand, the pressure of the ordinary taxes, and, on the other, the sense entertained of the increasing and uncertain burden of the poor-rates, including the fear of seeing the fruits of industry and contrivance carried off by men with large families who cannot be employed with advantage, the not unreasonable dread of the effects of secret repining and mischievous malice, and the outrages of hungry, idle, and lawless numbers.

Now for evils flowing from these sources, retrenchment, however exaggerated, offers no prospect of remedy; from the nature of the case it is evident that ordinary economy is not the proper resort, but, that which is the best of all economy, judicious expence: we want here some plan through which present sacrifices may be more than repaid by accruing benefits.

We often hear it asserted, that war would relieve us: this must be said thoughtlessly, or wickedly; a state attended by such horrors and calamities should never be spoken of with levity and indifference; it is, however, undoubtedly true, that, if we were excited to some great national effort, we should be relieved from that pressure which weighs most heavily upon us. The plan of extended and organized emigration would produce such an excitement, resembling war for every useful purpose, and possessing over it these inestimable advantages, that the expences would always be controllable at pleasure, and not amounting to one fiftieth part of what might be apprehended from a war, and that it would neither be attended by its horrors nor succeeded by its languor and exhaustion. Surely the people of these islands, if, on reflection, they should be convinced that extended emigration is the proper remedy to our evils, will not be tardy in promoting it with that substantial energy which has been characteristic of their race from the remotest ages; energy, which is ready to burst into action at the call of justice, in favour of a

people with the merits of whose case we must be very imperfectly acquainted; and which I am convinced will not fail to exhibit itself effectually in favour of that population, which is as dear to us as ourselves, for it is part of ourselves, to rescue them from hopeless poverty and from that inaction which, to noble minds craving and sighing for honourable occupation, is one of the worst concomitants of poverty, and scarcely more tolerable.

My plan is, that regiments should be formed of six hundred emigrants each, the men being enlisted for a term of four or five years; that they should be exercised and drilled, and brought into a state of discipline, and then sent to the colony, and employed, under the same discipline, in clearing and cropping the forest. That, in order to enable them to carry on this process more effectually, they should be provided with scientific and skilful engineers to direct their operations; that, at the end of their term of service, a plot of cleared land should be allotted to each soldier, perhaps, four or five acres, and to the officers a plot, larger in due proportion; that the rest of the land, being the property of government, should be sold, and the greater part of the proceeds retained to assist in the expences incurred, a small share, perhaps a fifth, divided equally in money among the whole regiment, which should then melt into a civil population. But I should wish that each soldier, if he chose to give up the advantages, might, with his family, have his passage back to England, and

be placed in the situation in which he was before he went out, as I would willingly trust to the decided disposition of the mass to remain.

I am aware these regiments would be expensive, for, in order to effect their object, they must include many persons of great attainments in science and in arts, and besides, an essential part of the plan must be, to carry out also the wives and children; but after a time, it is very possible that a considerable part of the expence would be returned by the sale of the cleared land; and it is to be taken into the account that many of the families which would belong to them, are now supported through the poor-rates, and many others at present add to the turbulence of the country rather than to its wealth, and consequently augment the existing military charges. Those individuals who composed the regiments would, as emigrants, enjoy great advantages, not the least of which would be that they would be exempt from that forlorn and lonely feeling which is described as so oppressive to persons who assume that character: all this would be completely dispelled by the exhilarating society of a body of men acting under well-chosen leaders and directors.

I have read in a very interesting work on Canada, that it is not an uncommon thing in that country to see one Scotchman[1], with his hatchet,

[1] Mr. Mactaggart.

followed by his wife, almost sinking with fatigue, moving together towards the forest with the intention of cultivating it for their support. Here then we see one of that hardy and sagacious race, unsupported by comrades, unaided by science, facing the forest with the mere strength of his own mind, and trusting to the vigour of his arm ; no succour to fall back upon in case of sickness or accident, no friendly rivality to stimulate, no division of labour to promote its success, no barter to improve the productions of industry. It is surely touching to contemplate the struggle carried on by such a man ; but still the picture is even more instructive than touching, for if the forest may be attacked under circumstances so forlorn with any prospect of success, what may not be expected with the advantages which my plan holds out ? For according to that, it is the engineer on whom the brunt of the conflict falls, and he, in combating with his stern and frowning, though silent and passive adversary, has all the accumulated assistance which the stores of human improvement can provide : he will have the aid of science, and ingeniously formed instruments, he will be assisted by art in all the various branches which apply to the subject, and he may form his plans in the leisure of retirement, and avail himself of the able advice of others ; and he is to have the direction of large bodies of workmen, and may so combine their operations as to render the result of the whole

much more important than it could be, if each individual worked alone.

By the engineer, I mean a person capable of taking a comprehensive and scientific view of a district of country, and of directing the means requisite to render it valuable; his concluding duty would be to publish a report of his district, pointing out its advantages, and also its defects, with the means of remedying them.

But the providing for those individuals who compose the regiments, is very far from being the only or the principal advantage to which I look. after all, I chiefly reckon upon private speculation, and mean these regiments merely as each a nucleus round which other emigrants would collect. I think it probable that six hundred men, in four years, would clear twenty thousand acres; four-fifths of this district would be offered for sale, and the purchasers would come to their land with very important advantages: all the great difficulties would previously be surmounted, the regiment would be a protection and support to them, a repository of useful local knowledge, a resort in all cases of difficulty and embarrassment. After the soldiers were disbanded and settled, they would retain much of their previous organization; the officers would naturally form an aristocracy, and besides the aristocracy of grade, there is in every regiment an aristocracy of character, arising from the sense entertained of each individual's capacity

and disposition, which would much improve the population, and tend to make it more prosperous and useful.

The expense of the regiments must be reckoned on the losing side; the necessary taxes would constitute the sacrifice which the nation would make for the sake of accruing good. The question is, whether the good, which may reasonably be expected, would more than balance the evil of the cost? I should hope that the plan would work in this way, that the advantages therefrom resulting to the emigrant from these islands, would bring him up to the American settler: I mean that they would form an equivalent to those advantages which the Anglo-American possesses from his proximity and contiguity to the theatre of his speculation, so that we might proceed with him in the great race of peopling the earth.

To state my object in a few words, I wish to bring about in this country an effectual demand for men and women. No one, I believe, is more capable of appreciating the blessings of such a state of society than yourself; no one would be more disposed to rejoice in it. Then should we see the cottage maid, when she gave her hand to an industrious labourer who had been captivated by the spotless purity of her manners and conduct, take a step on which she would be greeted by the unfeigned congratulations of all around her; it would never enter into the head of any one, that

the couple, or their progeny, could be superfluous; if their labour was wanted in the parish, or neighbourhood, they would gladly stay; if not, they would cross the sea to some spot where, still protected by their king, and surrounded by their countrymen, they would find those who were willing and able to show them how to gain a plentiful and ungrudged subsistence.

There is one point in which I am sure we shall agree; namely, that wherever a colony is established, there the Church of England clergyman should be provided with a lasting and respectable competency, and placed in a situation in which he may carry on his important functions in dignity and honour.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

H. B. SAWBRIDGE.

London,
July 7th, 1832.

THE END.

LONDON:
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.